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Some common species of *Crataegus* at Thompson's Mills, Georgia

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Within the confines of the little settlement of Thompson's Mills, several handsome species of *Crataegus* are very abundant. Within a stone's throw of the settlement, on a pasture hillside covered mainly with a heavy growth of tall pines, the underbrush consists almost entirely of various species of *Crataegus*, one of which, *Crataegus Beadlei* Ashe, has not before been reported for Georgia. In this particular lot, which has been pastured to hogs and stock for a long time, the profusion and vigor of the various intermingling species seems to depend largely upon the noticeable enrichment of the soil and its thorough cultivation, so to speak, by the great number of hogs that are kept on this enclosure. *Crataegus Crus-galli* L., *C. spathulata* Michx., *C. uniflora* Muench., *C. collina* Chapman, and *C. Beadlei* Ashe were everywhere in evidence.* Concerning the habits of growth and ornamental characteristics of these species the writer has made notes, from time to time, which may be of some interest to those studying the *Crataegus* group in Georgia.

CRATAEGUS CRUS-GALLI L. This is one of the commonest and most ornamental thorns in the Thompson's Mills region. It is found in woods and in open fields. The finest and most symmetrical specimens are found on pasture hillsides, where they become profusely branched trees twenty feet or more in height. About May 1 in this region, this *Crataegus* bursts suddenly into bloom and becomes whitened with numerous clusters of fragrant blossoms about 0.5 inch in diameter. Each corymb contains from 10-25 white blossoms. These corymbs, about 1.5 inches across, are exceedingly abundant on some shrubs and are subtended by rosettes of rich, dark green shining leaves which seem to heighten both colors by their striking contrast. The pink or rose-colored

*The species of *Crataegus* mentioned in this paper were identified through the kindness of W. W. Eggleston, of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

anthers likewise add to the attractiveness of the flowers. The odor of the blossoms is pearlike, permeating the woods around, and attracting swarms of bees and wasps.

The leaves are usually obovate or oblanceolate and finely serrate from the middle to the obtuse or almost truncate apex. On the upper surface they are very dark shining green as if varnished; beneath paler and smooth throughout. Formidable thorns are developed in great abundance; they are strong, sharp and slender, and range from 1.5 to 2 inches in length.

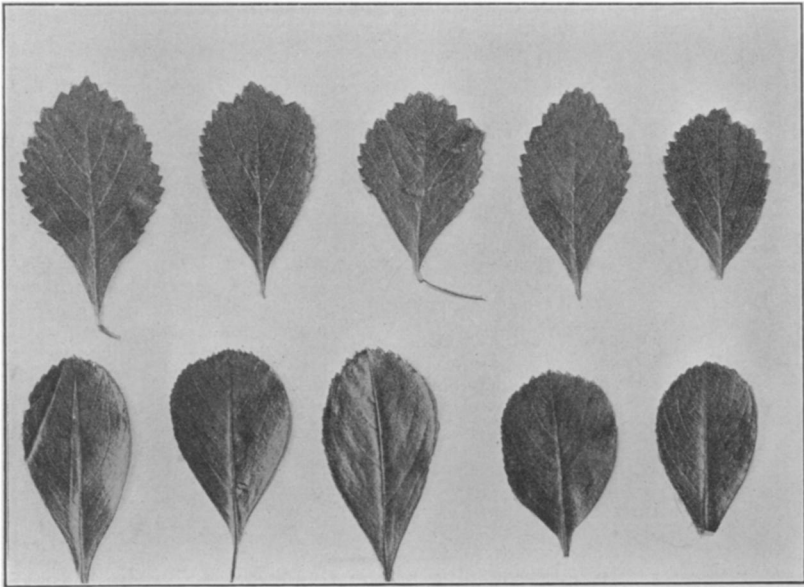


FIGURE 1. Upper row, leaves of *Crataegus uniflora*; lower row, leaves of *C. Crus-galli*; about four fifths natural size.

The corymbs of this *Crataegus* usually burst into bloom almost simultaneously, and a day or two later the white petals are falling in showers like snowflakes.

The fruit of *C. Crus-galli*, which is more or less oval in shape, ripens late in October. During the season of 1910, the fruit of this thorn was still green or only slightly reddened on one side on October 18. When ripe the color is a pale red. The abundant foliage is shed early. During the season of 1910 defoliation was complete before the middle of October, although the green fruit

was still retained. This *Crataegus* fruits abundantly in enriched soils, but is oftentimes quite barren on sterile, rocky hillsides. It is a common pasture species on the plantation of the J. N. Thompson Co., and is the favorite nesting site of the mocking bird in this region.

CRATAEGUS SPATHULATA Michx. This is a very common species in various situations at Thompson's Mills. It occurs in

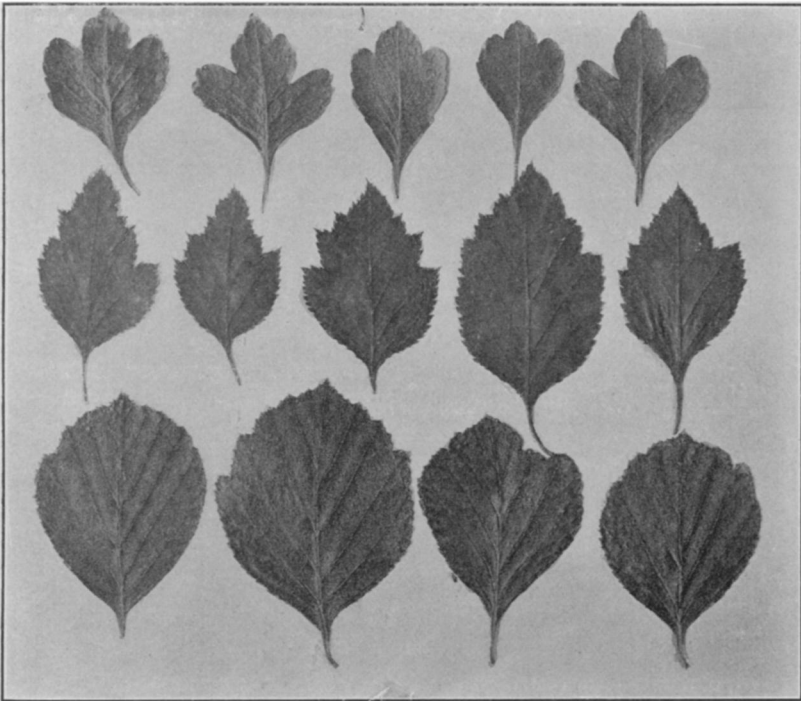


FIGURE 2. Uppermost row, leaves of *Crataegus spathulata*; middle row, *C. Beadlei*; lowest row, *C. collina*; about two thirds natural size.

deep, rich clay soils abundantly supplied with moisture and also in thin dry soils barely covering ledges of rocks. In the former situation it may become a much branched, graceful, showy tree 20 to 25 feet in height. In the latter, it assumes a low, fantastic, broad-headed, gnarled, and irregular habit of growth. In some situations this thorn forms almost impenetrable thickets. In the open, the stiff, tortuous branches sometimes grow in well defined.

horizontal or downward sloping planes. The almost vertically growing leaves are very abundant, smooth above, and rather a dull shade of dark green. These are arranged almost invariably along the upper side of the branches in numerous close clusters which closely invest the compound corymbs of small, white, numerous blossoms. Each flower cluster is made up of from 12 to 25 blossoms. The buds are sometimes rose-tinged. About May 1, the slender branches become graceful, white flower plumes, which fill the air around with a pleasing, penetrating, spicy fragrance. Slender, tapering thorns from 1 to 1.25 inches long are usually abundant. The bark of this *Crataegus* is usually smooth and gray or brownish in color. The tiny fruits are ripened abundantly about October 15 at Thompson's Mills. These fruits are small, globose or somewhat flattened, reddish orange in color, and do not shed readily when mature as with *C. uniflora* and others.

The fruits are dry and possess little taste. This thorn is one of the most ornamental shrubs in the Thompson's Mills region, and deserves far more attention than it usually receives.

CRATAEGUS UNIFLORA Muench. This pretty little *Crataegus* is a very common species in fields and rocky pastures. In the stock pasture mentioned at the beginning of this paper, particularly fine round-headed specimens of this thorn are everywhere common. Here it is a small, much branched shrub usually from two to about four feet in height. Under favorable conditions its short, numerous, stiff branches grow out equally on all sides producing a compact, rounded and symmetrical shrub of very pretty appearance.

The pale green mostly obovate or oblong cuneiform leaves are crenate-toothed and finely pubescent, so that it appears as if the upper surface were covered with the thinnest gossamer.

The almost sessile blossoms, which are about 0.5 inch in diameter, appear about the first week of May and are mostly solitary or in corymbs of two or three. The small size of these blossoms makes them rather inconspicuous among their leaf rosettes, so that they do not greatly add to the ornamental qualities of the shrub during the season of bloom. They possess, however, a very marked spicy fragrance. A conspicuous feature of the blossoms of this thorn is the calyx with its long, narrow, leaflike, sharply

serrate divisions about twice the length of the white petals. The thorns are slender, straight and rigid, running from 1.5 to 1.75 inches in length.

The fruit ripens about the middle of October and at maturity falls with the slightest touch. These fruits are smooth, globose, 0.5 inch or more in diameter, and orange-red in color. The flesh is firm, rather juicy, and with a spicy odor and taste. The prominent calyx adds noticeably to the appearance of the pretty fruits. This little thorn is extremely attractive in autumn when sprinkled with the rather large orange-red haws.

CRATAEGUS COLLINA Chapman. This *Crataegus* is a common species at Thompson's Mills. It is seen at its best in open fields, where it sometimes becomes a much branched, round-headed tree 15 to 18 feet or more in height.

The leaves are somewhat coarse in texture, dark, dull green in color, mostly obovate and doubly serrate. The young twigs are somewhat pubescent. Thorns are numerous, stout, and about 1.5 inches long.

This *Crataegus* blossoms several weeks earlier than the other species mentioned in this paper, all of which are in bloom about May 1. On this date in 1910, some trees of *C. collina* were loaded with haws 0.25 inch or more in diameter, green or slightly tinged with red on one side. At maturity the fruits are large, globose, and red in color. *Crataegus collina* is one of the largest and most ornamental thorns at Thompson's Mills.

CRATAEGUS BEADLEI Ashe. This *Crataegus* is fairly common locally at Thompson's Mills. It is especially common on the wooded pasture hillside mentioned earlier in this paper. Here it is rather evenly distributed as underbrush beneath the heavy pines, and attains a height of from 8 to 10 feet. The branches are somewhat tortuous and irregular in their manner of growth, producing an open-headed, straggling bush.

The leaves are thin, delicate, light green in color, and quickly wilt when a branch is cut. The compact corymbs are from 1 to 1.5 inches across, and include from four to six white showy blossoms. These corymbs are scattered along the slender branches, and rarely include more than five blossoms, which fill the air in the vicinity with a heavy, sweet, pear blossom fragrance. The blossoms are from 0.5 to 0.75 inches in diameter.

The duration of the blossoming period varies considerably in different individuals. Some bushes open their blossoms almost simultaneously. Others blossom more slowly for a considerable interval so that the intermingling of the buds and blossoms pro-



FIGURE 3. *Crataegus Beadlei* Ashe, in bloom.

duces a very pleasing effect. The heavy fragrance of these blossoms attracts great numbers of bees and wasps. The fruit is ripened about the middle of October, and readily falls when ripe. These fruits are oval to globular, somewhat irregular in outline,

and dull orange-red in color. At Thompson's Mills, this *Crataegus* shows considerable variation in size of thorns, blossoms, fruits, etc.

Crataegus Beadlei occurs mainly in woods at Thompson's Mills. This thorn was first described in 1900 by Ashe, who found it at Salisbury, North Carolina.* The Thompson's Mills record of this thorn makes it an addition to the flora of Georgia.

In many respects the species of *Crataegus* are among our



FIGURE 4. *Crataegus Beadlei* Ashe, showing leaves and flowers; somewhat reduced.

hardiest and most ornamental native shrubs and trees, and they deserve to occupy a prominent place in the adornment of all home grounds and parks. These shrubs in most instances become strikingly lovely during the season of bloom. A number of species are worthy of cultivation for their foliage effects alone. In autumn the abundant orange and red haws again render most species very attractive.

*See "New North American plants—Some new species of *Crataegus*" in Bulletin 175 of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, 1900.

At Thompson's Mills on the estate of the J. N. Thompson Co., several fine individuals of *C. collina* have by good foresight been allowed to grow until they have become especially fine, large, flourishing trees.

Crataegus collina is the finest species in this region, and in open, favorable situations it becomes a clean, compact, symmetrical round-headed tree, the heavy foliage of which affords an abundance of shade.

In this region *Crataegus spathulata* has few peers among the wild, native ornamentals. The dark green leaves of *C. Crus-galli*, which are as glossy as if they had been varnished, are an especially attractive feature of this thorn. The smaller *C. Beadlei* is most attractive in springtime when covered with the numerous white blossoms. With a little care the species of *Crataegus* can be readily transplanted, and may be trained to become very graceful and shapely shrubs or trees. It is rather to be deplored that we so often neglect our wild, native ornamental thorns for something foreign and oftentimes not nearly so hardy or so pleasing to the eye.

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